

REMARKS

The Office Action dated January 7, 2004, has been received and carefully noted. The amendments made herein and the following remarks are submitted as a full and complete response thereto.

As a preliminary matter, Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 70, 71, 73, and 74 of the present application.

Claims 70, 71, 73, and 74 have been amended to be in independent form including all the limitations of the base claims 60 and 66, respectively. Claims 60, 66-69 and 75 have been cancelled without prejudice. New claims 76-81 have been added. Applicants submit that the new claims as well as the amendments made herein are fully supported in the specification and the drawings as originally filed, and therefore no new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 61-65, 70-74 and 76-81 contains allowable subject matter, and the application should be allowed.

Claims 60-69 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohtani et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,854,096, "Ohtani") in view of Hashizume (JP Patent No. 40328651A, "Hashizume"); over Ohtani in view of Hashizume and in further view of Tajima (JP Patent No. 02194626, "Tajima"); over Ohtani in view of Hashizume and in further view of Rohatgi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,766,964, "Rohatgi"). In addition, claims 72 and 76 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohtani, Hashizume and in view of Saraswat et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,250,818).

Claims 60, 66-69 and 75 have been cancelled without prejudice, and therefore the rejection with respect to these claims are now moot.

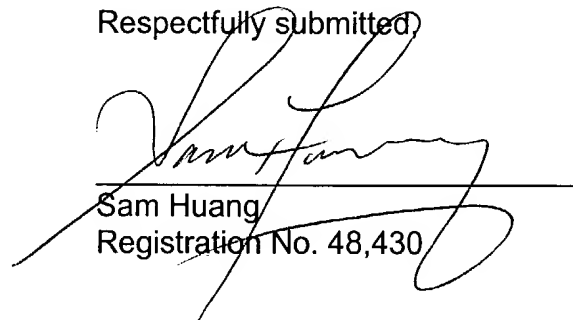
Claims 70, 71, 73, and 74 have been amended to be in independent form including all the limitations of the base claims 60 and 66, respectively, and therefore these claims are allowable. Claims 61-65, 72, 76-81 depend from allowable claims 70 and 71, respectively, and therefore these claims are also allowable.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that each of claims 61-65, 70-74, 76-81 recites subject matter that is neither disclosed nor suggested in the cited prior art. Applicants also submit that the subject matter is more than sufficient to render the claims non-obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art, and therefore respectfully request that claims 61-65, 70-74, 76-81 be found allowable and that this application be passed to issue.

If for any reason, the Examiner determines that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the Applicants' undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

In the event this paper has not been timely filed, the Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300 referencing Attorney Docket No. 107318-00000.

Respectfully submitted,



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Enclosure: Extra Claims Transmittal